(b) whether Japan is the world's third largest coffee importing country after US and Germany;

(c) whether India has stepped up its coffee promotion efforts in Japan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) Yes. Sir.

(c) and (d) As one of the fastest growing markets for coffee and also considering the potential to market high quality arabica and robusta coffee, the Govt. of India has identified Japan as an important target market for coffee exports.

For boosting exports of coffee in overseas markets including Japan, the Coffee Board has been undertaking various external promotional activities which include :-

- participation in selected International Exhibitions and Trade fairs by exhibiting exportable grades of raw coffee, Indian/instant coffee, charts, blow-ups, serving liquid coffee made out of the Coffee from India to the visitors through our stalls in all these exhibitions;
- sponsoring trade delegations/inviting roasters' delegations from all target markets to India and organising buyer-seller meets between Indian exporters and overseas buyers in key markets;
- releasing advertisements on the excellence and selectivity of Indian Coffee in important coffee trade journals and magazines in potential markets for Indian coffee etc.
- Organising visit of a high level delegation of All Japan Coffee Association comprising leading coffee roastes/importers to the coffee growing regions of Karnataka. The feedback received from the delegation after their return from India is very encouraging.

Centre for International Commercial Association

3120. DR. A. K. PATEL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India is not having Centre for International Commercial Association; and

(b) whether Government plan to make efforts with United Nations to sanction at least one such Centre in India in view of globalisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Hardships to farmers in Plantation Sector due to Import Policy

3121. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any submission during the last three years from State Governments regarding hardship to farmers and work in the plantation sector due to the import policy in this sector;

(b) if so, the details including the action taken on the above submission;

(c) whether the latest Indo-Sri Lankan bilateral agreements have hit the plantation sector of Kerala badly;

(d) if so, the detals thereof; and

(e) the import and export in the plantation sector for the last three years, year-wise, State-wise and category-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A delegation from Government of Kerala had submitted a representation highlighting various issues concerning plantation industry in Kerala, which included a demand for suspension of import of all plantation crops for re-export. The matter was examined by the Government and it was felt that the import policy of the Government had not adversely affected the plantation sector. In the case of tea and coffee, imports are mainly for re-exports with value addition. The total import of tea is about 2% of the production of tea in the country and more than 95% of imported tea is re-exported. Import of tea is allowed for re-export in order to increase the price competitiveness of Indian tea in the international market and also to cater to the requirements of international buyers. In fact, the substantially improved performance in India's tea exports to Iraq during 2002-2003 would not have been possible without the required tea blends, which have been using a good portion of the imported teas.

Besides, Government has taken adequate steps to protect the plantation sector from any surge in imports, which includes increasing the import duty on tea and coffee to 100%. In the case of Natural Rubber (NR), duty free import of NR against advance licence and by EOU/EPZ units is banned and only two ports *viz.* Kolkata and Visakhapatnam are designated for all imports of NR